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There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master—*Ishwara*—who by his magic power causeth all things and creatures to revolve mounted upon the universal wheel of time.

—*The Bhagavad-Gita*

THEOSOPHY

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THE POWER OF TRUE IDEAS

THE month of March, in the year 1975, is a natural time for considering the work of William Q. Judge. An excellent source of materials for such reflection is the pamphlet series of his articles contributed to the *Path* and other journals, which began appearing last year as supplements to this Magazine. These articles are unparalleled in the clarity and simplicity of exposition of Theosophical doctrines, and they also set forth the meaning and character of the Theosophical Movement, making evident the role and importance of H. P. Blavatsky in establishing the Movement in the world and supplying its moral and philosophic impetus.

Brotherhood, self-knowledge, loyalty to the Teachers, practical application of philosophy in daily life, and common sense in Theosophy—these are the keynotes of Mr. Judge's work. His language is that of the common man, yet what he wrote shows that he, too, had "the power and the knowledge that belong but to lions and sages." The themes he chose for development were always ideas relating to the high potentialities of even the humblest of human beings, and his method was to present emancipating conceptions and then to show both their reasonableness and their capacity to inspire. When he spoke of the Movement, it was in terms of the sweep of centuries, and of the vision of the Adepts who look across the crests of cycles to the great fulfillments to be realized, one day, by all mankind.

Madame Blavatsky wrote in a comprehensively encompassing style to deal with the farthest reaches of Western intellectual de-

velopment in various branches of learning, as well as to place of record a new classical expression of the Wisdom Religion, in such symmetry as was possible during her time and for a future of indefinite extent. Mr. Judge also wrote comprehensively, but for the ordinary reader. This was an extraordinary task and achievement, for it is difficult indeed to write of profound matters simply and without distortion. Students of Mr. Judge know how well he accomplished this task, since they have found that there is no better preparation for the demanding study of *The Secret Doctrine* than to saturate their minds with the distillations of the teaching found in his few books and many articles.

But what is study for? The mastery of doctrine and becoming familiar with the Theosophical vocabulary are but the externals of an undertaking which has for its underlying purpose the recovery of the feeling and knowledge that human beings are gods in exile—spiritual beings bent on a high mission and a great work. He spoke with peculiar understanding to both the strength and the weakness of his readers—providing a rational ground to fortify their hopes, and an ennobling and heartening perspective on weakness in the timeless and immemorial doctrine of the Higher Self in each one. The weaknesses, he showed, are not part of our true selves, but belong to the raw materials of life, the stuff of a common evolution which we have engaged, through an ancient vow, to refine and uplift.

It becomes clear that this is a work we are to do together, in the fellowship of pursuit of a common ideal. There is in every normal human breast a natural inclination to brotherhood, but it has been long frustrated and enfeebled by mistaken conceptions of the nature of man. Again and again Mr. Judge returns to this theme. After quoting one of the Adept-Teachers on the Theosophic objective of building "new institutions of a genuine practical brotherhood of Humanity, where all will become co-workers with Nature," he said:

> This is the great tone running through all the words from these sources. It is a call to work for the race and not for self, a request to bring to the west and the east the doctrines that have the most effect on human conduct, on the relations of man to man, and hence the greatest possibility of forming at last a true universal brotherhood. We must follow this program and supply the world with a system of philosophy which gives a sure and logical basis for ethics, and that can only be gotten from those to which I have adverted; there is no basis for

morals in phenomena, because a man might learn to do the most wonderful things by the aid of occult forces and yet at the same time be the very worst of men.

A subsidiary condition, but quite as important as the other, is laid down by H.P.B. in her words that we must "remain true to ourselves." This means true to our better selves and the dictates of conscience. We cannot promulgate the doctrines and the rules of life found in Theosophy and at the same time not live up to them as far as possible. . . . Not only should we do this because the world is looking on, but also from a knowledge of the fact that by our unity the smallest effort made by us will have tenfold the power of any obstacle or any opposition offered by the world.

This is indeed the secret of success in Theosophical work. It declares far more than mere moralism, since it is the law of human evolution, the foundation of that reconstruction which, in time, gains the power to move mountains and recreate worlds. And here, again, we see the immense importance of what has been so simply termed self-knowledge. From self-knowledge the individual aspirant gains a realizing sense of his divine origin and identity, a growing awareness of what is worthy of the inner being, the hidden god, and what is not, and hence a true control of both mind and heart. It is this restoration of the moral strength of the individual that self-knowledge makes possible, through increasing recognition of his spiritual past, of the duties which he assumed, and of the work which is wholly natural to such a being.

By this strengthening of the idea of the true self, all things are accomplished. The great and historic changes contemplated as the fruition of the Theosophical Movement can be brought about by no other means. The obliteration of false ideas of the self is the first step, and this can be successful only through their replacement with living truth. Hence the importance of promulgation of true ideas. Human beings are made of thought. Thought lies behind act. So, with the rebirth and spread of true ideas, the great reformation of the world and its ways must eventually come about. The goal and the means of the Theosophical Movement do not change. Mr. Judge wrote in 1892:

The outlook, the difficulties, the dangers, the necessities are the same now as then [when H.P.B. published her *Key to Theosophy*], and as they were in the beginning of this attempt in 1875. For, as she has often said, this is not the first nor will it be the last effort to spread the truths and to undertake the same mission as that taken up by Ammonius Saccas some cen-

> turies ago—to lead men to look for the one truth that underlies all religions and which alone can guide science in the direction of ideal progress. In every century such attempts are made, and many of them have been actually named "theosophical." Each time they have to be adapted to the era in which they appear. And this is the era—marked by the appearance and the success of the great American republic—of freedom for thought and investigation.

Speaking of the work of the first sixteen years following 1875, he pointed out that in even that brief time many old ideas known to the ancients had gained new currency and were modifying the thought of the day. Then he said:

> We do not claim to be the sole force that began the uprooting of dogmatism and priestcraft, but only that we have supplied a link, given words, stirred up thoughts of the very highest importance just at a time when the age was swinging back to anything but what the reformers had fought for. The old faiths were crumbling and no one stood ready to supply that which by joining religion and science together would make one scientific and the other religious. We have done exactly what the letter quoted [from *The Occult World*] asked for, led the times a step "to the primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans." . . .
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> Our destiny is to continue the wide work of the past in affecting literature and thought throughout the world, while our ranks see many changing quantities but always holding those who remain true to the program and refuse to become dogmatic or to give up common-sense in theosophy.

This, he pointed out, was what the Messenger to come would need as foundation, for practical use in the days which then lay far ahead, but which are now almost upon us. Mr. Judge concluded by quoting from H.P.B. "Think," she said, "how much one to whom such an opportunity is given could accomplish."

There is no man without the Spirit, and no man without that experience of the past; but the mind is the realm of creation, of ideas; and the Spirit itself, with all its power, acts according to the ideas that are in the mind.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THREADS OF OCCULT SCIENCE

X

It is not that among the *Hatha* Yogins—men who at times had reached through a physical and well-organized system of training the highest powers as "wonder-workers"—there has never been a man worthy of being considered as a true Yogin. What we say, is simply this: the *Raja Yogin* trains but his mental and intellectual powers, leaving the physical alone, and making but little of the exercise of phenomena simply of a physical character. Hence it is the rarest thing in the world to find a real Yogi boasting of being one, or willing to exhibit such powers—though *he does acquire them as well as the one practising Hatha Yoga, but through another and far more intellectual system.* Generally, they deny these powers pointblank, for reasons but too well-grounded. The latter need not even belong to any apparent order of ascetics, and are oftener known as private individuals than members of a religious fraternity, nor need they necessarily be Hindus. Kabir, who was one of them, fulminates against most of the later sects of mendicants who occasionally become warriors when not simply brigands, and sketches them with a masterly hand:

"I never beheld such a *Yogi,* Oh, brother! who forgetting his doctrine roves about in negligence. He follows professedly the faith of MAHADEVA and calls himself an eminent teacher; the scene of his abstraction is the fair or market. MAYA is the mistress of the false saint. When did DATTATRAYA demolish a dwelling? When did SUKHADEVA collect an armed host? When did NARADA mount a matchlock? When did VYASADEVA blow a trumpet? etc." [II, 31.]

It certainly is not worth the while of any sensible man to spend time in learning such puerilities as are above described [in a report of phenomena produced by a fakir]. These are the baser branches of occultism. A Yogi who gets frightened at any threat is *no* Yogi, but one of those who learn to produce effects without knowing or having learnt what are the causes. Such men, if not tricksters, are simply *passive* mediums—not adepts! [II, 144.]

If an ascetic prefers a subterranean cave to the open fresh air,

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NOTE.—This collation of comments by H.P.B. is compiled from notes in volumes, I, II, and IV of the *Theosophist.* Sources are given by volume and page.

takes (apparently) the vow of silence and meditation, refuses to touch money or anything metallic, and, lastly, passes his days in what appears the most ludicrous occupation of all, that of concentrating his whole thoughts on the tip of his nose,—he does this, neither for the sake of playing an aimless comedy nor yet out of mere unreasoned superstition, but as a physical discipline, based on strictly scientific principles. Most of the thousands of fakirs, gosseins, bayraguis and others of the mendicant order, who throng the villages and religious fairs of India in our present age, may be and undoubtedly are worthless and idle vagabonds, modern clowns, imitating the great students of the philosophic ages of the past. And, there is but little doubt that, though they ape the postures and servilely copy the traditional customs of their nobler brethren, they understand no more *why* they do it than the sceptic who laughs at them. But, if we look closer at the origin of their school and study Patanjali's *Yoga Vidya*—we will be better able to understand and hence appreciate their seemingly ridiculous practices. If the ancients were not as well versed in the details of physiology as are our physicians of the Carpenterian modern school,—a question still *sub judice*—they may perhaps be proved, on the other hand, to have fathomed this science in another direction by other methods far deeper than the former; in short, to have made themselves better acquainted with its occult and exceptional laws than we are. That the ancients of all countries were intimately acquainted with what is termed in our days "hypnotism" or self-mesmerisation, the production, in a word, of voluntary trance—cannot be denied. One of the many proofs is found in the fact that the same method, described here, is known as tradition and practised by the Christian monks at Mount Athos even to this very day. These, to induce "divine visions," concentrate their thoughts and fix their eyes on the navel for hours together. A number of Russian travellers testify to such an occupation in the Greek convents, and writers of other nationalities, who have visited this celebrated hermitage, will bear out our assertion. . . . [I, 315.]

An unmistakable error. . . . confounds the *Raja* with the *Hatha* Yogins, whereas the former have nothing to do with the physical training of the *Hatha* nor with any other of the innumerable sects who have now adopted the name and emblems of *Yogins*. Wilson in his *Essays on the Religions of the Hindus* falls into . . . confusion and knows very little, if anything at all, of the true *Raja Yogins* who have no more to do with *Siva* than with *Vishnu* or any

other deity. Alone, the most learned among the *Sankara's Dandis* of Northern India, especially those who are settled in Rajputana who would be able—if they would—to give some correct notions about the *Raja Yogins*. . . . If, in speaking of the *Dandis,* we have used above the phrase beginning with the conjunction "if," it is because we happen to know how carefully the secrets of the real *Yogins*—nay even their existence itself—are denied within this fraternity. It is comparatively but lately that the usual excuse adopted by them, in support of which they bring their strongest authorities, who affirm that the *Yogi* state is unattainable in the present or *Kali* age—has been set afloat by them. "From the unsteadiness of the senses, the prevalence of sin in the *Kali,* and the shortness of life, how can exaltation by the *Yoga* be obtained?" enquires *Kasikhanda.* But this declaration can be refuted in two words and with their own weapons. The duration of the present *Kali Yuga* is 432,000 years of which 4,979 have already expired. It is at the very beginning of *Kali Yuga* that Krishna and Arjuna were born. It is since Vishnu's eighth incarnation that the country had all its *historical* Yogis, for as to the prehistoric ones, or claimed as such, we do not find ourselves entitled to force them upon public notice. Are we then to understand that none of these numerous saints, philosophers and ascetics from Krishna down to the late Vishnu Brahmachári Báwa of Bombay had ever reached the "exaltation by Yoga?" To repeat this assertion is simply suicidal in their own interests. [II, 31.]

As the science and study of Yoga Philosophy pertains to Buddhist, Lamaic and other religions supposed to be atheistical, *i.e.,* rejecting belief in a personal deity, and as a Vedantin would by no means use such an expression, we must understand the term "absorption into God" in the sense of union with the *Universal Soul,* or *Parama Purusha*—the Primal or One Spirit. [II, 72.]

By Ishwar and Master is not meant the personal God, whom the believers in such God suppose to be the creator of the universe, and outside the universe—Brahmachári Báwa does not recognize such a god in relation to the universe. His god is Brahma, the eternal and universal essence which pervades everything and everywhere and which in man is the divine essence which is his moral guide, is recognized in the instincts of conscience, makes him aspire to immortality and leads him to it. This divine spirit in man is designated Ishwar and corresponds to the name Adonai—Lord, of the Kabalists, *i.e.,* the Lord within man. [I, 52.]

A true esoteric Vedantic Adwaitee would say: *Aham eva Parabrahm,* "I am also Parabrahma." In its external manifestation *Jivan* may be regarded as a distinct individuality—the latter a maya—in its essence or nature Jivan is—Parabrahm, the consciousness of the Paramatma manifesting through, and existing solely in, the aggregated *Jivans* viewed collectively. A creek in the shore of the ocean is one, so long only as the land it stretches upon is not redeemed. Forced back, its water rebecomes the ocean. [IV, 228.]

THE OBSCURED MAN

I honor that man whose ambition it is, not to win laurels in the state or the army, not to be a jurist or a naturalist, not to be a poet or a commander, but to be a master of living well, and to administer the offices of master or servant, of husband, father, and friend. But it requires as much breadth of power for this as for those other functions,—as much, or more,—and the reason for the failure is the same. I think the vice of our housekeeping is that it does not hold man sacred. The vice of government, the vice of education, the vice of religion, is one with that of private life. . . .

. . . . The men we see in each other do not give us the image and likeness of man. The men we see are whipped through the world; they are harried, wrinkled, anxious; they all seem the hacks of some invisible riders. How seldom do we behold tranquility! We have never yet seen a man. We do not know the majestic manners that belong to him, which appease and exalt the beholder. There are no divine persons with us, and the multitude do not hasten to be divine. And yet we hold fast, all our lives long, a faith in a better life, in better men, in clean and noble relations, notwithstanding our total inexperience of a true society. Certainly this was not the intention of nature, to produce, with all this immense expenditure of means and power, so cheap and humble a result. The aspirations in the heart after the good and true teach us better,—nay, the men themselves suggest a better life.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

ARE THE "ARABIAN NIGHTS" ALL FICTION?

By W. Q. J.

FOR many years it has been customary to regard that collection of interesting stories called "The Arabian Nights," as pure fiction arising out of Oriental brains at a time when every ruler had his story-teller to amuse him or put him to sleep. But many a man who has down in his heart believed in the stories he heard in his youth about fairies and ghosts, has felt a revival of his young fancies upon perusing these tales of prodigies and magic. Others, however, have laughed at them as pure fables, and the entire scientific world does nothing but preserve contemptuous silence.

The question here to be answered by men of science is, how did such ideas arise? Taking them on their own ground, one must believe that with so much smoke there must at one time have been some fire. Just as the prevalence of a myth—such as the Devil or Serpent myth—over large numbers of people or vast periods of time points to the fact that there must have been something, whatever it was, that gave rise to the idea.

In this enquiry our minds range over that portion of the world which is near the Red Sea, Arabia and Persia, and we are brought very close to places, now covered with water, that once formed part of ancient Lemuria. The name Red Sea may have arisen from the fact that it was believed really to cover hell: and its lower entrance at the island of Perim is called "Babel Mandeb," or "the Gate of Hell." This Red Sea plays a prominent part in the Arabian Nights tales and has some significance. We should also recollect that Arabia once had her men of science, the mark of whose minds has not yet been effaced from our own age. These men were many of them magicians, and they learned their lore either from the Lemurian adepts, or from the Black Magicians of the other famous land of Atlantis.

We may safely conclude that the Arabian Nights stories are not all pure fiction, but are the faint reverberations of a louder echo

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NOTE.—This article was first printed by H. P. Blavatskp in the *Theosophist* for October, 1884.

which reached their authors from the times of Lemuria and Atlantis.

Solomon is now and then mentioned in them, and Solomon, wherever he was, has always been reckoned as a great adept. The Jewish Cabala and Talmud speak of Solomon with great reverence. His power and the power of his seal—the interlaced triangles—constantly crop up among the other magical processes adverted to in these tales. And in nearly all cases where he is represented as dealing with wicked genii, he buried them in the Red Sea. Now if Solomon was a Jewish King far away in Palestine, how did he get down to the Red Sea, and where is there any mention made of his travelling at all? These genii were elemental spirits, and Solomon is merely a name standing for the vast knowledge of magic arts possessed by adepts at a time buried in the darkness of the past. In one tale, a fisherman hauls up a heavy load, which turns out to be a large *iron* pot, with a metal cover, on which was engraved Solomon's Seal. The unlucky man opened the pot, when at once a vapour rose out of it that spread itself over the whole heavens at first, and then condensed again into a monstrous form who addressed the fisher saying, that ages before he had been confined there by Solomon; that after two hundred years he swore he would make rich the man lucky enough to let him out; after five hundred years that he would reward his liberator with power; but after one thousand years of captivity he would kill the one who should free him. Then he ordered the man to prepare for death. The fisherman, however, said he doubted that the genii had really been in the pot as he was too large. To prove that he had been, the spirit immediately assumed the vaporous condition and slowly with spiral motion sank into the iron pot again, when at once the fisherman clapped on the cover and was about to cast him back into the sea. The djin then begged for mercy and agreed to serve the man and not to kill him, whereupon he was released.

Many persons will laugh at this story. But no one who has seen the wonders of spiritualism, or who knows that at this day there are many persons in India, as well as elsewhere who have dealings with elemental spirits that bring them objects instantaneously, &c., will laugh before reflecting on the circumstances.

Observe that the pot in which he was confined was made of metal, and that the talismanic seal was on the cover. The metal prevented him from making magnetic connection for the purpose of escaping, and the seal on the cover barred that way. There

were no marks on the sides of the pot. His spreading himself into a vast vapour shows that he was one of the elementals of the airy kingdom—the most powerful and malignant: and his malignancy is shown in the mean, ungrateful oath he took to destroy whomsoever should be his liberator. His spreading into vapour, instead of at once springing out of the pot, refers to his invisibility, for we see that in order to enter it he was compelled to assume his vaporous state, in which he again put himself into the pot.

In another story we see a young man visiting an elemental of the nature of a Succubus, who permits him now and then to go out and perform wonders. But the entrance to her retreat is unseen and kept invisible to others. In India there are those who are foolish enough to make magnetic connection with elementals of this class, by means of processes which we will not detail here. The elemental will then at your wish instantaneously produce any article which the operator may have touched, no matter how far away it may be or how tightly locked up. The consequences of this uncanny partnership are very injurious to the human partner. The records of spiritualism in America will give other cases of almost like character, sufficient to show that a compact can be entered into between a human being and an intelligence or force outside of our sensuous perceptions.

In other stories various people have power over men and animals, and the forces of nature. They change men into animals and do other wonders. When they wish to cause the metamorphosis, they dash a handful of water into the unfortunate's face, crying: "Quit that form of man and assume the form of a dog." The terrible Maugraby is a Black Magician, such as can now be found in Bhootan, who had changed many persons, and the story of his destruction shows that his life and power as well as his death lay in the nasty practices of Black Magic. When the figure and the talisman were destroyed he was also. The white magician has no talisman but his Atman, and as that cannot be destroyed, he is beyond all fear.

But this paper is already too long. We are not forcing a conclusion when we say that these admirable and amusing tales are not *all* fiction. There is much nonsense in them, but they have come to us from the very land—now bleak and desolate—where at one time the fourth race men held sway and dabbled in both White and Black Magic.

letters · questions · comment

According to Theosophy, each man must become his own authority, whether it be about truth or right conduct. But external circumstances often seem determining influences in the lives of men who, confined by habit, ignorance, lack of imagination, or apathy, are commonly lacking in judgment. Is it not advisable, then, to listen to counsel from the wisest "authorities"?

Listening to those who seem to have sound basis for their views does not exclude the necessity for evaluating what they say. Even acceptance involves the decision, at some point, to do so. The whole of H.P.B.'s presentation of Theosophy provides the metaphysical rationale for this exercise of individual and responsible choice.

Perhaps the question recalls what Mr. Judge says in his *Path* editorial for March, 1887, where he speaks of the present development of mankind as a whole as a stage requiring further assumption of individual responsibility. He says:

> In former times the disclosed Vedas, and later, the teachings of the great Buddha, were the right authority, in whose authoritative teachings and enjoined practices were found the necessary steps to raise Man to an upright position. But the grand clock of the Universe points to another hour, and now Man must seize the key in his hands and himself—as a whole—open the gate.

If good judgment is recognized as the criterion of "natural" authority—an attribute increased through exercise—it should also be noted that there is no time or any situation which prohibits its development. But the undeniable fact of human vulnerability to an outside authority gives the question an educational imperative. What is authority, and how may it function so that human beings become more self-reliant? It would be difficult to improve on some words by Mr. Crosbie on this subject:

> The Authority which we recognize is not what men term authority, which comes from the outside and which demands obedience, but an internal recognition of the value of that which flows through any given point, focus, or individual. This

> is the authority of one's Self-discrimination, intuition, the highest intellection. If we follow what we recognize in that way, and still find it good, we naturally keep our faces in that direction. This means no slavish following of any person—a distinction which some are unable to grasp.

From a "practical" point of view it may be noticed that since we act on various levels, and have varying knowledge and skills in relation to each one, the guidance or help we obtain from others will be different in each case. One who plans to build a house, but is without experience, will naturally find it sensible to seek out a builder, or at least a carpenter, for help and counsel. He will look to the authority of experience in order to avoid serious mistakes or wasteful activity. His own judgment is of course involved in selecting help. When it comes to seeking the meaning of one's life, the crucial consideration to be kept in mind is that self-knowledge is obtained by each one for himself—there are no authorities in this except the self, although paradoxically, a kind of natural "authority" attaches to the suggestion of those who insist on individual responsibility in pursuing this quest. We can always learn from others—whether by their example or by their suggestive ideas—but converting the help so gained into knowledge, which eliminates all trace of authority, is the work of the individual.

We might recall, here, what H.P.B. says in the conclusion of her Preface to *The Secret Doctrine*, a work which, she declared, "claims consideration not by reason of any appeal to dogmatic authority, but because it closely adheres to Nature, and follows the laws of uniformity and analogy." This being her principle, students of H.P.B. naturally entertain trust in her writing, it then becoming their obligation to recognize and verify the adherence to Nature of what she says. An informed faith in a teacher grows through experience—the individual experience of learning how to convert teaching into knowledge.

Considering evolution as a process of education, it seems natural that those beings who have knowledge of both the potentialities and karmic limitations of those involved in any particular cycle would be in a position to see what general course of action would provide the best opportunities for growth. They would be the ones to plan the "curriculum," so to speak. But the curriculum is only the plan, not the evolution. Individual egos must determine how those possibilities shall be worked out. The distributive effects of individuals acting in concert produce the level

of development reached throughout the periodic rise and fall of civilizations—now creating conditions of a Dark Age, now those of a society that can welcome a Buddha.

To the extent that any individual succeeds in strengthening the power of the discriminative principle within himself, to that degree he becomes his own dependable authority. For to know, in this sense, is to be able to suit action to principle, not to custom or habit, however esteemed by others.

THE BRIDGE OF HUMAN THOUGHT

The same power exists in all of us, yet where we stand on the ladder of being we see many below us and others greater than we above us. Humanity now is building the bridge of thought, the bridge of ideas that connects the lower with the higher. The whole purpose of incarnation, or our descent into matter, was not only to gain further knowledge of matter, but to impel the lower kingdoms to come up to where we are. We stand as gods to the lower kingdoms. It is our impulsion that brings them weal or woe. It is our misconception of the aim of life that makes Nature so hard; that causes all the distresses and disasters which afflict us in cyclones, tornadoes, diseases, pestilences of every kind. All are our own doing; and why? Because there is a sublimation of mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms in our bodies, which are lives in themselves. Every cell in our bodies has its birth, youth, manhood, decay and death, and its reincarnation. We are impelling each one of those lives according to whatever thought, will, or feeling we may have, whether for help or injury to others. These lives go out from us for good or evil, back into their kingdoms with good or evil. So by our lack of understanding of our own true natures, without a comprehension of universal brotherhood, we are imperfectly performing our duties on this plane and are imperfectly helping the evolution of the lower kingdoms. We shall realize our responsibility to them only as we see that every being is on his way upward; that all above man have been men at one time; that all below man will some time reach man's estate, when we have gone on further; that all forms, all beings, all individualizations are but aspects of the One Spirit.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

EVERYDAY OCCULTISM

THE third and fifth chapters of the *Bhagavad-Gita* are devoted to action or Karma, as understood by the best of men. Each chapter begins with a question by Arjuna, the student, addressed to Krishna his Higher self. Placed between the two is the fourth chapter, devoted, not to the first question, but to the basis of all actions, good or bad, wise or foolish.

Life—or the *Gita*—is read in many ways, for all Beings have the same power to act, and the various Kingdoms of nature all arise from this inherent power, as exercised from the basis of prior experience. Among men, as one of those kingdoms, there prevail three interpretations of Life. One is represented by the "armies," or followers, whether of Arjuna or Duryodhana, for "the world follows whatever example they set." Krishna gives scant attention to either army, leaders or followers, or to the common "weapons" employed by them in the struggle for existence. Why is this?

It is because their time has not yet come for "conscious communication with the Higher self"—or else because that time is already past for this incarnation. Mankind in any given generation or cycle of Karma is of many degrees of intellectual and spiritual evolution, though all with enough in common to constitute one single kingdom of Souls. During that greater cycle called Kali-Yuga the majority is "checked by its Karma," that is to say, suffering from the Law of Retardation, or what is dimly sensed in the Christian sects as "original sin," and in science as atavism. These are either those Souls which represent the failures of a former Round of Manvantara, or those which have reached the Human stage only in this present cycle of psycho-spiritual evolution. They are those men who rely upon Authority—that is, upon others to do their thinking for them.

Why atavism and barbarism, superstition and materialism, culture and cruelty, selfishness and unselfishness, should exist side by side, in the race and in the individual—all these are vast problems either ignored or evaded by both religion and science. The plain

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NOTE.—This article is from a series of essays on the *Bhagavad-Gita* first printed in volume 15 of THEOSOPHY.

Truth of the matter is that all religions represent atavism spiritually, and all our boasted sciences rationalized animalism, in their dealings with nature and with man. How can they, then, do other than regard Life physical or metaphysical as filled with mysteries and missing links? It is, but the mysteries and missing links are in themselves, and due to false perspective.

Only those who, like Arjuna, have come to the point where they are ready to question the very foundations of their belief, the "pair of opposites" called religion and science—only these are in any way capable of hearing the voice of the Higher self, of laying hold of the Yoga of Krishna, Spiritual Knowledge. Even these "strivers for perfection" find it extremely difficult to emancipate their minds from the thralldom of the "Sattva quality"—the good they perceive in both religion and science despite predominant errors. It is hard to see that the highest good to humanity and one's self does not lie, in the first instance, in conduct itself, but in a consideration of the basis of all actions—why it is that what we call good and what we denominate evil both proceed from identically the same source, under the same law or process.

Karma, as Duty, cannot be understood as apart from Life. The followers of the Sankhya school and those of the Yoga philosophy have, each of them, laid hold of but a *half*-truth: one is determined to renounce all actions, the other to perform only such actions as should be done. This means that one party seeks Nirvana, the actionless state, as superior to manifested existence; the other is equally determined to act perfectly in an imperfect world. Both are, in fact, impossible positions. Each is based upon a false assumption: "*I* am the 'final authority' in what I shall do or not do." To have final authority over one's self implies final knowledge on our part. Well, who has it? So we ought to be, not only willing to learn, but determined to learn, which implies accepting no one and nothing as the, or a, final authority. Final knowledge is not in the world of manifested being.

In the third chapter Arjuna has gotten over his "despondency," but he is still querulous and is now disposed to find fault with his self-chosen teacher. We always do, and the way her students found fault with H.P.B., and in her, is only a modern instance. The real trouble was in Arjuna, as it is in ourselves, because we want the authority, while the Teacher has the Knowledge. We are in the "bonds of Karma" while the Teacher is "emancipated." How is this "pair of opposites" to be reconciled? They cannot be recon-

ciled. We have to go over to the basis provided by the Teacher—or fall back. This is an easy transit for those looking for some one else to do their thinking and their choosing for them, but it may be difficult for one who has progressed so far in evolution that he has developed some Self-reliance of his own, has achieved some standing as an authority on his own account. Yet that is what has to be done—to become in the sight of others, if not in one's own, a mere follower or believer. It can never be achieved in a spiritual sense until one learns that the new relation is spiritual and intellectual, not personal: the relation of Disciple and Teacher.

What is that new position? It is that Being is eternal; that our "past Karma" is, spiritually, synthesized by our religion and science, our basis of action, not by the actions themselves. That basis is itself a fluctuating, transitory one, ever-changing; mortal, in short: an Immortal being with mortal views of Life and Duty.

Arjuna believed in Karma and Reincarnation; he was as fully persuaded of their truth as our modern religionist of his revelation, or our modern evolutionist of his theories. His doctrines were his religion. It had never occurred to him that they are Teachings—Instructions, and therefore to be deeply studied, not believed in, reverenced, worshipped, but to be understood and applied in all the relations and affairs of daily life.

That Krishna knew what was going on in Arjuna's mind, even if Arjuna himself did not, is clear; so the question of the third chapter was replied to as if it had been asked in good faith. Krishna knew, as Mr. Judge once wrote, that "protests are the advance-guard of the Ego." The question answered, then the fourth chapter is devoted to the real relation between Spirit and Mind, between Masters and mankind, between Teacher and pupil. That relation has subsisted through long ages and many incarnations; it is known to Krishna, but only believed in by Arjuna in the form of the religious and scientific doctrines of his time; it is quickened in men only when the Teacher incarnates. The real "bridge," the real *Antaskarana,* whether between the Higher and the Lower self in any man, or between Teacher and Disciple, may be thought of as complete knowledge on the one side, complete faith on the other. By this means that mystic Union so often spoken of may be achieved. The faith of the pupil will inspire him to act on the Instruction of the Teacher, instead of on his own incomplete knowledge. This is the *"sword* of Spiritual Knowledge" which alone can "cut asunder the doubt" which must ever exist in the heart of any

student until he knows for himself. The over-abundant failures in the past, as in the present, have been due, not to any lack of Instructions, but to not following them. The impure, the idle, the curious and contentious minded are always demanding more "instructions." Knowledge does not lie in directions given but in direction taken—in acting out the Instruction of the Teacher with one's whole heart. Then we either know for ourselves what we have assumed the Teacher knows, or we know that the teacher is a false one, in which case we can look for another Instructor. In any event our doubt is resolved.

The opening question of the fifth chapter is altogether different in tone from that beginning the third. Arjuna is still uncertain but it is an honestly expressed doubt. He recognizes intuitively that this sword of spiritual knowledge is a double-edged weapon: it will expose the Teacher or it will expose himself. Which edge shall he use first?

> At one time, O Krishna, thou praisest the renunciation of action, and yet again its right performance. Tell me with certainty which of the two is better.

Krishna's reply is that any one using this sword will speedily find that "it cuts both ways": it will more and more show forth the real nature of both teacher and pupil, of both higher and lower Self, of both Spirit and Matter.

> Children only and not the wise speak of renunciation of action and of right performance of action as being different. He who perfectly practices the one receives the fruits of both. . . . That man seeth with clear sight who seeth that the Sankhya and the Yoga doctrines are identical.

The language of nature is Yea *and* Nay; the language of man is Yea *or* Nay; the language of the Divine world is neither, but is the "Word" of St. John, the "Wisdom from on high." What is the "language of the gods"? It is the recognition of LIFE before Duty, of Unity before separateness, of Action or Karma as One, and not many. There can be here no question of "Thou, I, He"; of thy duty and my duty. The reply of Krishna is the Eternal answer to the ever-recurring moral question at each conjunction of the "five agents of action": What is *my* duty? Karma is neither selfishness nor unselfishness, neither good nor bad, neither performance nor non-performance of any deed, rite, or practice. "Karma" is the manifestation of *all* Life, and Wisdom is its highest manifestation, as the "Three Qualities" are its progressive lower manifestations.

This is all placed before the student in Mr. Judge's "Antecedent Words":

> The *Bhagavad-Gita* tends to impress upon the individual two things: first, *selflessness*, and second, *action;* the studying of and living by it will arouse the belief that there is but one Spirit and not several, that we cannot live for ourselves alone, but must come to realize that there is no such thing as separateness, and no possibility of escaping from the collective Karma of the race to which one belongs, and then, that we must think and act in accordance with such belief.

If Mr. Judge had never done another thing than to reincarnate the Spirit of the *Bhagavad-Gita* he would have shown himself an immortal benefactor of "the coming race," a "friend of all creatures," and "the greatest of the Exiles"—as he was called with the expressed as well as silent approval of H.P.B. while yet she was among us. His life showed what the *Gita* only teaches—that those who live the life of a true Disciple enter into the very Being of the Teacher:

> Many who were free from craving, fear, and anger, filled with my spirit, and who depended upon me, having been purified by the ascetic fire of knowledge, have entered into my being. In whatever way men approach me, in that way do I assist them, but whatever the path taken by mankind, that path is mine.

Spreading Ideas

It is because there are those in the world desirous of helping humanity to proceed further, that we are not worse off. Often the ideas given out by men in high places are not the result of their own cogitations, although thought to be such. Many an idea is received by those who have the ear of the public, who speak and will be heard, from Those with a far deeper knowledge of the issues at stake, yet whose voices would not be heard at all. So, though there may seem to be little action on the part of Theosophical disciples, there is much action on inner planes of being, and that action never but for the benefit of humanity. If only once any considerable number of persons could take the true position and act from the true nature, right ideas would soon spread all over the earth.

—Robert Crosbie

INITIATION

As every one knows, in all the great religions of old time, there were certain grades among the devotees, and the successive steps by which these grades were attained were marked off by initiation into the mysteries.

Such initiations still exist among the votaries of the Wisdom-Religion and, being by their very nature involved in the most profound mystery, much curiosity has been awakened as to their precise character. There are many who seem to look upon initiation as a purely mechanical process which depends solely upon the will of the initiator, and some seem inclined to blame the stewards of the mysteries for not publishing whatever knowledge they may possess as widely as possible, so that it may be within the reach of any individual of an enquiring turn of mind.

The really important part of initiation is however the fitness of the candidate himself. Just as it is said in the Bible that new wine put into old bottles is liable to burst those bottles, so, in like manner, if esoteric knowledge is imparted too far in advance of the progress already made, the mental balance of the candidate will be upset and madness is liable to supervene.

Hence the attitude we should adopt is not so much one of an intense desire for initiation—often but a form of ambition, the wish to be wiser than our fellows—as an intense determination to do everything in our power to fit ourselves for reception as initiates.

If it is true that "the whole universe is an aggregate of states of consciousness," it would seem to follow that the real difference between one who is an initiate and one who is not lies in the fact that the former looks at all things from a totally different standpoint to the majority of men. It is not that he has acquired certain items of knowledge that others do not possess, such as the way to manipulate the hidden forces of nature, but that he is on a higher plane of consciousness altogether. If such a higher plane has been attained, it will follow that his whole range of ideas will differ

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NOTE.—This article was first published by H. P. Blavatsky in the *Theosophist* for June, 1886.

from that of others and he will be sensible of the operation of causes of a more far-reaching character than those cognized by others. He will be as it were in the possession of higher and superior information and so will be able to form juster conclusions and this fact alone will give him enormous power.

The action of the entire universe is but a detailed manifestation and example of the action of mind on matter, governed at the highest point by the action of the universal mind. Between the finite human mind of the ordinary uninitiated individual and this universal mind lie an infinite number of gradually ascending degrees, and the higher the plane of consciousness the nearer is the approach to the universal mind which is, as it were, the mainspring of the whole. Although there are no hard and fast lines in nature yet these various grades may be marked off into great main divisions; and it is the successive attainment of these, one after the other that is represented by the degrees of initiation. When one plane of experience has been exhausted, there is needed, as it were, a fresh impulse to enable us to go on higher and this it is that is supplied at the time of initiation.

—ALPHA

The few elevated minds who interrogate nature instead of prescribing laws for her guidance; who do not limit her possibilities by the imperfections of their own powers; and who only disbelieve because they do not know, we would remind of that apothegm of Narada, the ancient Hindu philosopher:

"Never utter these words: 'I do not know this—therefore it is false.' "

"One must study to know, know to understand, understand to judge."

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

on the lookout

Declining Efficiency

Along with recognition that unlimited consumption is not possible in a finite environment, it is becoming increasingly clear that the solution to our problems is not merely to consume less. A more organic relationship between the earth and ourselves is also required. Writing in *Resurgence* (July-August, 1974), E. F. Schumacher observes that agriculture, a basic human activity, is now one of the largest consumers of the irreplaceable fossil fuels. Moreover, the fertilizer so obtained is of constantly diminishing effectiveness. Dr. Schumacher quotes figures from Barry Commoner:

> In 1949, an average of about 11,000 tons of fertilizer nitrogen were used *per . . . unit of crop production,* while in 1968 about 57,000 tons of nitrogen were used for the same crop yield. This means that the efficiency with which nitrogen contributes to the growth of the crop declined fivefold.

The Yield of Natural Means

He adds that during the same period, the increase in the annual use of fertilizer nitrogen was over seven times the increase in population and in agricultural production. The first steps toward a solution, he says, must be taken by restoring the direct relationship between the earth and the human beings it supports. This means a deliberate change in our way of life: the use of technology must be consistent with the natural cycles and processes governing production, not displace them by imposing man-made rhythms. This means, for one thing, using renewable sources of energy such as organic fertilizers and human and animal labour. Dr. Schumacher counsels at some length:

> At least agriculture should be so organized that it can, in case of crisis, absorb large amounts of labour, thereby giving large numbers of people the chance of making a living. There is no branch of production more suitable for the intelligent utilisation of solar energy and other "income fuels" and also for the systematic practice of "recycling." Nor do we have to look for entirely "new models" if we want to develop a truly

self-supporting agriculture. Many successful farmers around the world, in rich countries as well as in poor, are today obtaining excellent yields without mammoth mechanisation and without using any products of the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. Their methods are properly attuned to the cycle of nature which, as we all know, requires no other fuel input but that of solar energy.

A Natural Starting Point

It may seem surprising that a consideration of energy policy has taken us "back to the soil" and thus "back to nature." But this is quite inevitable if we wish to move from the surface of the problem to its root. The mortal weakness of the modern world lies in its alienation from the unalterable facts of nature, one manifestation of this alienation being its heedless reliance on fossil fuels. What has been said above is not meant to suggest that putting agriculture on a basis of permanence would, by itself, provide a solution of the energy problem. It does mean to suggest, however, that no solution can be found in terms of energy technology and economics or energy power politics—alone, and that the challenge presented by the energy problem is one of developing a new life-style—a development which logically and inevitably must begin with a change of our relation to the soil, of which we are a product and which alone sustains our lives.

Theater Therapy

Rehabilitation which is neither subject to official prison management nor dependent on it is getting a toehold through the combined initiative of concerned theater people and cooperating inmates. (*Saturday Review/World,* 7/13/74.) Akila Couloumbis, an actor "in search of an audience," found the inmates at Riker's Island so interested and willing to help that he founded The Theater for the Forgotten. (He had grants from the Kaplan Fund and the New York State Council on the Arts.) The group holds acting classes and workshops in addition to regular performances. The object of most prison workshops is to provide prisoners with opportunity for expressing the ideas, emotions and frustrations they cannot resolve in either prison or in normal life. But according to this account, participation by the prisoners has produced considerably more than outlets for frustration:

Improvisation is the most popular workshop technique. It allows the prisoners to feel uninhibited, but at the same time it forces them to use logic and imagination, to cooperate with others, and to articulate their emotions. Most important, improvisation builds up the inmates' confidence in their ability

to handle the unexpected without resorting to violence. In New Jersey's Cell Block Theater (run by Alba Oms, Ramon Gordon and Thea Lammers), certain improvisations must contain a conflict that can't be resolved violently or by calling the police. The inmate must find other ways to solve the scene's dilemma.

Various Benefits

The article notes that prison inmates frequently look for some means of establishing an identity that distinguishes them from the mass. The workshops serve this purpose. But participation in acting, reading plays, writing and analyzing scripts leads to constructive self-images and purposes. Former prisoners who participated in writing and acting workshops have fewer re-arrests than the national rate. The opportunity to assume a variety of roles combined with an absorbing variety of work available in theater productions seems to provide an environment in which durable rehabilitation, based on self-initiated and self-devised effort, can take place.

African Invasion

The disastrous famine now decimating both the human and animal populations of the six countries bordering the Sahara is due less to climatic changes than to destructive agricultural and economic practices, according to an article in *Science* (July 19, 1974). Nicholas Wade traces the beginning of the change to efforts by western nations, notably the French, to divide the nomadic tribes of this region into six small countries and to encourage a monetary economy complete with cash crops, taxes, and national governments. One effect of this program was the inhibition of natural freedom of movement across artificial state boundaries. Complicating the situation was the introduction of Western medicine, which created the fastest population increase in the world and raised the number of grazing cattle far beyond what the land could support. Intensive agriculture using modern machinery upset traditional methods of crop rotation and age-old tribal grazing agreements. The result has been social chaos and an escalating spiral of starvation for man and beast.

Traditional Symbiosis

The *Science* writer describes how well the inhabitants of this region once managed its delicately balanced ecology:

The key to the Sahelian way of life was a remarkably effi-

cient adaptation to the semidesert environment. Although the nomads' life-style may seem enviably free to those who dwell in cities, there is nothing random about their migrations. The dry season finds them as far south as they can go without venturing within the range of the tsetse fly. Between the nomads and the sedentary farmers who also inhabit this area there is a symbiotic arrangement: The nomads' cattle graze the stubble of the crops and at the same time manure the fields. In exchange for manure the nomads receive millet from the farmers. With the first rains, the grass springs up and the herds move northward. The rains also move north and the cattle follow behind in search of new grass.

The migration northward continues as long as the "grass looks greener ahead than at hand." When the northern edge of the Sahelian rain belt is reached, the return southward is begun. Back in the dry season belt, the cattle find a crop of mature grass that will support them until the next growing season.

A Natural Wisdom

These cycles were apparently well understood by the human inhabitants of the Sahel:

> The traditional migration routes followed by the herds, and the amount of time a herd of given size might spend at a particular well, were governed by rules worked out by tribal chiefs. In this way overpasturage was avoided. The timing of the movement of animals was carefully calculated so as to provide feed and water with the least danger from disease and conflict with other tribal groups.

The *Science* writer comments:

> By virtue of what one writer has called "the essential ecological rationality of the nomadic pastoral regime," the herders made probably the best possible use of the land. The settled part of the population, the farmers, had an equally capable understanding of their environment. They knew to let the land lie fallow for long periods—up to 20 years—before recropping, and they developed an extraordinary number of varieties of their main staples, millet and sorghum, each adapted to different growing seasons and situations. Within the limits of their environment and technology, the peoples of the Sahel have, over the past centuries, demonstrated what University of London anthropologist Nicholas David calls "an impressive record of innovation . . . which is quite at variance with the common negative criticism of the African as unduly conservative." In fact, when the Sahelian peoples have been conservative and resisted changes advocated by Western experts, it has often been with reason.

Loss of Resilience

This account of the deterioration of grazing lands, brought on by well-intentioned boring of deep wells to tap large underground water resources, shows that the region was once not a wasteland but a complexly functioning region of interdependent species. Western "improvements" ended this natural use of the land:

> With all the old safeguards in abeyance, the cattle numbers began to chew up the ecology across the whole face of the Sahel. First the perennial grasses went. These usually grow up to 6 feet tall and put down roots as deep. If the plant is heavily grazed, its roots make a shallower penetration and, in dry periods, may fail to strike water. The perennial grasses are replaced by coarse annual grasses, but these, under heavy grazing and trampling, give way to leguminous plants that dry up quickly and cannot hold the soil together. Pulverized by the cattles' hooves, the earth is eroded by the wind, and the finer particles collect and are washed by rains to the bottom of slopes where they dry out into an impermeable cement. . . .
>
> Under these abuses, the Sahel by the end of the 1960's was gripped by a massive land sickness which left it without the resilience to resist the drought. A whole vast area which might with appropriate management have become a breadbasket providing beef for half of Africa instead became a basket case needing more than $100 million worth of imported food just to survive.

As Mr. Wade notes, the recent history of Sahelia demonstrates that technological expertise is no substitute for intelligent observation of and cooperation with the natural order.

Threat of Famine

A report with ominous portents appeared in the September, 1974 *Audubon,* magazine of the National Audubon Society:

> Among atmospheric scientists a consensus is emerging that Earth is undergoing a climatic change likely to have profoundly adverse effects on agriculture. A symposium in Bonn, Germany, sponsored by the International Federation of Institutes for Advanced Study, concluded that evidence of a new and unfavorable weather pattern "is just short of overwhelming."
>
> The change appears to be cyclical and born of natural causes. (Of man's effect on climate we know as little as ever.) Scientists believe that recent droughts in the Sahel, in India and elsewhere in the tropics, as well as the shortened growing season in Soviet wheatlands, are not aberrations and must now be considered the norm. The northern latitudes are cooling and southern latitudes are warming, with consequences for world agricul-

tural production that may be disastrous. Over the next several decades, the scientists calculated, one billion people will die of starvation unless patterns of consumption in the wealthy nations are markedly altered. Consumption of meat—so extravagant of protein—may have to be cut by more than half.

Karma of Exploitation?

Basing their calculations on more than a thousand years of reconstructed temperature records, meteorologists predict that the weather prejudicial to agriculture is likely to last between twenty-five and forty years. "Earlier unstable periods with similar characteristics," it is said, "lasted a generation or more." Such descriptive accounts of climatic changes, while of interest, tell us little about their causes. Our science wholly neglects the possibility that the moral attitudes of human beings may have an effect on the weather, and it is at least conceivable that the excessive and indeed wasteful prosperity of the past hundred years or so will come to an end through unavoidable famine, perhaps driving men to think in another way about their relation to the planet that has been so ill-used and exploited at their hands. Meanwhile, we might recall research of some forty years ago, carried on by Raymond H. Wheeler, professor of psychology at the University of Kansas, which showed a close relationship between human affairs and changes in climate. Prof. Wheeler studied both history and climate over a long period, drawing conclusions which he reported in *Social Frontiers* for May, 1939.

Other Cycles

He found correlations between the extremes of "cold-dry" climatic conditions, at one end of the scale, with "warm-wet" at the other, and variations in culture:

> Consistently down through history, culture epochs marked by temporarily stable governments and "Golden Ages" have begun as climate shifts from the cold-dry maximum to the warm-wet. It is evident that these climatic shifts of historic time are miniatures of the long and more severe shifts of geologic time, during which climate was subtropical over large areas of the earth on the warm side, and cold enough for glacial expansion, amounting at times to ice ages, on the cold side. . . .
>
> The mentality of classical, warm periods is much more profound than that of cold periods, as measured by philosophy, science, art, and literature. These are periods when culture is dominated by a wealthy aristocracy. Cold periods are dominated by a democratically minded middle class of more humble, but

> of no less important achievements. Warm periods are organic; cold periods, atomistic. The warm are idealistic, the cold, utilitarian; the former rational, the latter, empirical; the former, "time-minded," the latter "space minded."

Such studies are of interest more for their focus on cycles than for their conclusions. While climate no doubt has its effect on the psychological tendencies of an age, we need to remember that Prof. Wheeler's observations cover a time-span which falls within the limits of Kali Yuga, when there are inevitably inversions of what would prevail in other great epochs. Commenting on historical cycles, H.P.B. remarked "the difficulty of comprehending, and discriminating between them, with regard to their physical and spiritual effects, without having thoroughly mastered their relations with, and action upon the respective positions of nations and races, in their destiny and evolution." (*S.D.* I, 642.)

Rediscovery of the "Will"

Recent discoveries about the involuntary interactions between mind and body, and how these can be controlled through training that involves more than "operant conditioning," have revived argument about the existence of free will and raised many questions about the nature of mind. Barbara Brown, a biophysiologist, has written a new book, *New Mind, New Body: Biofeedback: New Directions for the Mind,* which summarizes the work of researchers in the last fifty years, culminating in her own experiments (excerpts from the book appear in *Psychology Today* for last August). Barbara Brown asks why neither biologists nor psycologists have pursued the puzzling contradictions revealed by experiments on voluntary control of the automatic nervous system. In even the most elementary experiments, she says, an inner will in some form is obviously active. Explaining, she continues:

> Operant conditioning may be a highly limited version of biofeedback. When a bit of behavior is rewarded, that event feeds back information to the animal that something pleasant happens when he performs in a certain way. The animal, or human being, alters his behavior to receive more of the reward. He willfully manipulates his physical being to become an appropriate recipient.

Body Has a "Mind"

Although this hardly indicates the ranges of will, either in men or in nature, it does point to the fact that the relationship between intention and action is not merely mechanistic. On the basis of

biofeedback experiments in which human participants were taught to gain control of responses of the skin, muscles, heart and brain, Dr. Brown declares that the body has its own "mind." She also implies that will exists at a number of different levels, that organs and even cells have their own mind which is in some way internally motivated, and can, in turn, be made responsive to the internal will of the individual subject. It is not, as behaviorists maintain, responsive only to external stimuli. Moreover, she says, organs, and even cells, have their own memory.

Biological "First"

Reviewing a paper read at the first meeting of the Biofeedback Research Society in 1969 by John Basmajian, she identifies some of the questions such work revives for scientific consideration. Foremost is—

> The revelation, in all the true meaning of the word, that in some way the human mind could learn to control the electrical activity of a single cell. . . . There was simply no scientifically explainable way in which man could learn to control a single cell of his body. How could he even identify a particular cell? And then there was the matter of chemical systems involved in regulating the electrical activity of muscle cells. How could the mind control this complicated microcosm? It still seems a major miracle that ordinary people can learn so quickly to control faint whispers from muscle cells; cells so small that it takes many hundreds to be visible; cells buried deep within other muscle cells covered by layer after layer of other kinds of body tissues; cells under the control of other microscopic-sized cells deep in the spinal cord that respond to the infinite shadings of brain commands. . . .
>
> Basmajian himself made no real guesses as to the ultimate seat of control. Much to his credit, he may be the first of the modern hardline bioscientists to use the word "will" in a biological research publication.

She says further:

> For more than 50 years, behavioral science has forbidden the merest hint of will power as a real product of the human mind, and has admitted to study only the elemental forces of physical nature shared by animals. In all of their detailed analyses they have rarely studied love, or heart's desires, or fantasies or longing.

"Psychic and Noetic Action"

While the idea that even the simplest physical acts involve the will, even at the cellular level, should open the door wide to fur-

ther inquiry—involving admission of various levels of consciousness—students familiar with the Theosophical teaching on these matters would also suggest that this order of physical and mental action is far from comprising the whole of the "higher intellectual processes of the unconscious." Entirely left out, for one thing, is the effect of motive on the quality of the energy generated in the brain; nor is any attention paid to the dual aspect—"Psychic and Noetic Action," as H.P.B. puts it—of every organ and cell. In her article of that title, H.P.B. makes this general statement:

> The study of the "Physiology" of the Soul, of the Will in man and of his *higher Consciousness* from the standpoint of genius and its manifesting faculties, can never be summarized into a system of general ideas represented by brief formulae; no more than the *psychology of material nature* can have its manifold mysteries solved by the mere analysis of its physical phenomena. *There is no special organ of will,* any more than there is a *physical basis* for the activities of self-consciousness.

Higher and Lower Manas

But duality exists in the manifestations of consciousness and must be taken into account:

> Thus, the whole conclave of psycho-physiologists may be challenged to correctly define Consciousness, and they are sure to fail, because Self-consciousness belongs alone to man and proceeds from the SELF, the higher Manas. Only, whereas the psychic element (or *Kama-manas*) is common to both the animal and the human being—the far higher degree of its development in the latter resting merely on the greater perfection and sensitiveness of his cerebral cells—no physiologist, not even the cleverest, will ever be able to solve the mystery of the human mind, in its highest spiritual manifestation, or in its dual aspect of the *psychic* and the *noetic* (or the *manasic*), or even to comprehend the intricacies of the former on the purely material plane—unless he knows something of, and is prepared to admit the presence of this dual element.

"Aeolian Harp"

As a therapeutic aid, Biofeedback is held to restore control of physical well-being to the individual and to expand his concept of himself as the inhabitant of a body of unexplored potentialities. But much more is required of a philosophical explanation of the sources of human motivation than can be revealed by inspecting electrical charges recorded on a graph. Flight into "far-distant spheres of consciousness," for instance, posed as a possible al-

ternative to a world made uninhabitable by human irresponsibility, could hardly be the basis for a philosophy of inquiry into inner states of being shared by man and nature. In "Psychic and Noetic Action" H.P.B. comments on the mystery of mind:

> Verily, that body, so desecrated by Materialism and man himself, is the temple of the Holy Grail, the *Adytum* of the grandest, nay, of all, the mysteries of nature in our solar universe. That body is an Aeolian harp, chorded with two sets of strings, one made of pure silver, the other of catgut. When the breath from the divine Fiat brushes softly over the former, man becomes like unto *his* God—but the other set feels it not.

The Occult Teaching

> It needs the breeze of a strong terrestrial wind, impregnated with animal effluvia, to set its animal chords vibrating. It is the function of the physical, lower mind to act upon the physical organs and their cells; but, it is the higher mind *alone* which can influence the atoms interacting in those cells, which interaction is alone capable of exciting the brain, *via the spinal "centre" cord*, to a mental representation of spiritual ideas far beyond any objects on this material plane. The phenomena of divine consciousness have to be regarded as activities of our mind on another and a higher plane, working through something less substantial than the moving molecules of the brain. They cannot be explained as the simple resultant of the cerebral physiological process, as indeed the latter only condition them or give them a final form for purposes of concrete manifestation. Occultism teaches that the liver and the spleen-cells are the most subservient to the action of our "personal" mind, the heart being the organ *par excellence* through which the "Higher" Ego acts—through the Lower Self.

Early Civilized Americans

Legrand H. Clegg, an attorney who has done research on the pre-Colombian presence of black men in America, adds his voice to the challenge of anthropological assumptions about ancient races and their supposedly "primitive" capacities. (*Los Angeles Times,* Oct. 11, 1974). As Mr. Clegg puts it: "All that Columbus did back in 1492 was to put the continent on the maps of Europeans." He says that there is abundant evidence, both from skeletons unearthed and from cultural remains, that the people who first colonized the Americas were black and civilized. He cites sculptures of the human face and form belonging to the archaic and preclassical periods (in Mexico and Central and South America) which bear strong resemblance to African people.

Ancient Black Civilization

The contact with Africa appears to have been two-way, since researchers have found that maize was transported from America to West Africa. Noting such evidences of advanced pre-Colombian culture, he says:

> Other scientists have found a host of cultural parallels between ancient Africans and native Americans, including similar petroglyphs, coins, languages and religions. . . .
>
> Native legends of the Americas abound with exploits of early black people, and several Indian tribes trace their ancestry to ancient blacks. These assumptions, given credence by skeletons and sculpture, have led some historians such as Carlos C. Marquez to conclude that "the youthful America was also a Negro continent"—a statement backed up by the findings of European explorers.

Navigators, Too

Mr. Clegg adds that Columbus himself, during his third voyage, was told by the Haitians that black men had come there before him. Speculation among some historians about the origin of these mariners focuses on West Africa or the Melanesians or even Australian aborigines. It seems obvious that researchers are a long way from adequate and complete answers, but insistent asking of questions and pointing to evidence already assembled (but heretofore ignored) creates a climate of opinion in which the idea of early man as something more than a bestial savage may receive increasing acceptance. Sailors who could navigate the major oceans testify to ample technical knowledge. Moreover, the possibility that men once crossed the Pacific "on foot" is no longer derided, in view of recognition of the changing shape of the continents and the accumulating evidence of the antiquity of man himself.